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Centering compassion and interaction in online teaching¹

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During this COVID-19 pandemic, many instructors have been asked to quickly move their face-to-face classes online. This is challenging for many reasons: many instructors and students don't have experience teaching and learning online; making the transition quickly is difficult; and many students have challenges accessing up-to-date technology, internet, and a quiet place to study. Moreover, all of this is happening against a backdrop of high stress for students and instructors alike. Being compassionate and mindful of equity issues is especially important during this period. At the same time, today's challenges may provide opportunities that can carry forward past the pandemic, to re-create our classes as more compassionate environments — where instructors and students see each other more as whole people and assume best intentions in each other, and instructors place higher value on student agency. In this talk, I'll share research-based principles and strategies for moving courses online that focus on compassion, equity, and interaction; and I'll share examples of how instructors (including me) have been approaching these aspects of teaching physics online. This will draw from our article on the website PhysPort (Strubbe & McKagan 2020, https://tinyurl.com/physport-remote), workshops on remote teaching I have co-facilitated (APS New Faculty Workshop, Center for Astronomy Education), and my experience this fall with the University of Central Asia teaching physics online for students in rural mountain communities in Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

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